

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY

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TAGS: PARM, SOPN

SUBJECT: APRIL 6 ROUNDUP: PRESS ITEMS OF ARMS CONTROL
INTEREST

LONDON FOR AMB/EX, SOFIA FOR AMBASSADOR

1. WALTER PINCUS OF WASHINGTON POST REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT MET YESTERDAY WITH HIS TOP FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE ADVISERS TO HEAR THEIR PROPOSALS FOR ALTERNATES TO OUTRIGHT CANCELLATION OF NEUTRON WEAPONS PRODUCTION. "MEANWHILE, ADVERSE REACTIONS CONTINUED TO POUR INTO WHITE HOUSE FROM CONGRESS IN RESPONSE TO DISCLOSURE THAT IN PAST

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TWO WEEKS, CARTER REVERSED HIS EARLIER POSITION FAVORING PRODUCTION OF NEW GENERATION OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS," PINCUS SAID. HE REPORTED THAT LEADERS OF HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE DRAFTED LETTER TO PRESIDENT THAT ARGUED AGAINST BAN ON PRODUCTION. POST CORRESPONDENT SAID VANCE, BROWN AND BRZEZINSKI ATTENDED YESTERDAY'S SESSION WITH PRESIDENT, AND ALL THREE "REPORTEDLY WERE PRESSING FOR

PRESIDENTIAL DECISION THAT WOULD PRESERVE OPTION OF GOING AHEAD WITH PRODUCTION OF NEUTRON EIGHT-INCH ARTILLERY SHELLS AND LANCE MISSILE WARHEADS WHILE ATTEMPTING TO USE THEM AS BARGAINING CHIPS WITH SOVIET UNION IN ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS." PRESS SECRETARY JODY POWELL TOLD REPORTERS

THERE WAS NO DEADLINE FOR DECISION ON WHETHER CARTER WILL ORDER PRODUCTION OF NEUTRON ARTILLERY SHELLS AND WARHEADS. "POWELL DID SAY THERE WOULD BE MORE CONSULTATIONS WITH NATO ALLIES AND WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THOUGH HE ADDED THEY 'WON'T DRAG ON,'" PINCUS REPORTED. ALSO YESTERDAY, PINCUS ADDED, FOR FIRST TIME HIGH COST OF NEUTRON WEAPONS WAS SUGGESTED BY POWELL AS ONE AREA OF CONCERN IN CARTER'S ASSESSMENT OF HIS PRODUCTION DECISION. ACCORDING TO INFORMED SOURCES, EACH EIGHT-INCH NEUTRON SHELL WOULD COST ALMOST ONE MILLION DOLLARS AND ENTIRE PURCHASE WOULD COME TO OVER ONE BILLION DOLLARS. THAT WOULD INCLUDE SOME 43 MILLION DOLLARS TO COVER COST OF BUILDING SPECIAL PRODUCTION FACILITIES FOR SHELL. PINCUS REPORTED THAT SENATE MAJORITY LEADER SAID HE BELIEVED WEAPONS SHOULD BE BUILT; REP. BOB WILSON SAID CARTER "WOULD BE MISTAKEN TO ABANDON NEUTRON AT THIS LATE DATE." REP. TED WEISS, WHO WAS UNSUCCESSFUL LAST SEPTEMBER IN FIGHTING PRODUCTION OF WEAPONS, SENT LETTER PRAISING CARTER FOR PROPOSING HALT TO PROGRAM. JOINING WEISS WERE 60 OF 109 HOUSE MEMBERS WHO LAST YEAR VOTED AGAINST NEUTRON PROGRAM, PINCUS SAID.

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2. IN EDITORIAL COMMENT, NEW YORK TIMES SAID NEUTRON WEAPONS ARE "GOOD BARGAINING CHIP IN ARMS NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOSCOW. THEY ARE DEFENSIVE WEAPONS OF RELATIVELY LITTLE VALUE TO WARSAW PACT, WHOSE STRATEGY IS TO ATTACK. THUS MOSCOW SHOULD OFFER REAL CONCESSIONS -- PULLBACK OF SOME OF ITS TANK DIVISIONS OR REMOVAL OF SOME OF ITS MISSILES AIMED AT WESTERN EUROPE -- IN EXCHANGE FOR WESTERN NONDEPLOYMENT.... BY AGREEING TO GO FORWARD WITH ITS PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT -- UNLESS MOSCOW OFFERS SOME SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS IN EXCHANGE -- HE (CARTER) CAN STILL REPAIR MUCH OF DAMAGE THAT HAS BEEN DONE."

3. WASHINGTON POST EDITORIALY SAID "WE NOW FEEL THAT IF NEUTRON WEAPONS ARE TO BE HELD OUT OF WESTERN ARSENAL, THEY SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED OUT WITH RUSSIANS--AND ONLY FOR SOMETHING CONSIDERABLE IN RETURN.... IF SOVIETS WISH TO INFLUENCE DEPLOYMENT OF THESE WEAPONS IN NATO THEATER THEY SHOULD BE GIVEN CHANCE TO DO SO -- BY APPROPRIATE MEANS, WHICH IS BY TRADING OFF SOME OF THEIR OWN INCREASINGLY NATO-DIRECTED ARMS, ARMS THAT HAVE HAD MORE THAN LITTLE TO DO WITH JUSTIFYING NEED FOR NEUTRON WEAPONS IN FIRST

PLACE."

4. BALTIMORE SUN OBSERVED EDITORIALY THAT "IF PRESIDENT CARTER NOW DECIDES TO BAN PRODUCTION OF TACTICAL NEUTRON WEAPONS, WHICH WERE DESIGNED TO OFFSET MASSIVE SOVIET BUILDUP IN CENTRAL EUROPE, HE HAD BETTER BE PREPARED TO SHOW HE HAS WON KREMLIN CONCESSIONS IN RETURN. REPETITION

OF HIS UNRECOMPENSED DECISION TO JUNK B-1 BOMBER WOULD NOT BEAR UP POLITICALLY IN TODAY'S WASHINGTON.... UNILATERAL SCRAPPING OF NEUTRON WEAPON COULD UNDERCUT CHANCES FOR SENATE RATIFICATION OF SALT TWO TREATY, WHICH MUST REMAIN TOP PRIORITY.... DECISION TO BAR ITS PRODUCTION WOULD BE EASY IF RUSSIANS WERE CONTENT TO ALLOW UNCLASSIFIED

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MILITARY BALANCE TO STABILIZE IN CENTRAL EUROPE. INSTEAD, THEY HAVE STRENGTHENED THEIR FORCES TO POINT WHERE NEUTRON WARHEADS MAY BE NEEDED AS BARGAINING CHIPS TO FORCE SOVIET RESTRAINT."

5. JOHN VINOCUR OF NEW YORK TIMES REPORTED THAT "HIGHLY PLACED WEST GERMAN SAID TODAY THAT SHOCKED REACTIONS FROM SECURITY ADVISERS IN WASHINGTON AND ALLIED COUNTRIES IN WESTERN EUROPE APPARENTLY LED PRESIDENT CARTER TO RECONSIDER TENTATIVE DECISION TO FORGO PRODUCTION OF NEUTRON BOMBS."

6. WASHINGTON POST REPORTED FROM PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, THAT FORMER PRESIDENT FORD CALLED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEUTRON BOMB AND SAID HE WAS SURPRISED AND DISAPPOINTED BY NEWS ACCOUNTS THAT CARTER HAS DECIDED TO ABANDON PROJECT.

7. DEFENSE SECRETARY BROWN, ADDRESSING OVERSEAS WRITERS LUNCHEON IN WASHINGTON, SAID THERE IS "REASONABLE CHANCE" OF REACHING SALT TWO PACT THIS YEAR, PARTLY DEPENDENT ON TOTAL CLIMATE OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT MURREY MARDER SAID BROWN TOLD JOURNALISTS SOVIET UNION HAS MADE "SOME MOVEMENT ON NUMBER OF ISSUES" AND "WE'VE CLARIFIED OUR POSITION ON NUMBER OF ISSUES." BUT PATTERN OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION, BROWN REMINDED REPORTERS, ALWAYS LEAVES SOME OF MOST CRITICAL ISSUES TO FINAL HOURS, OR MINUTES, OR BARGAINING. THEREFORE, HE SAID, ULTIMATE RESULT IS AFFECTED NOT ONLY BY HOW POSITIONS OF TWO NATIONS EVOLVE, BUT "IT ALSO DEPENDS INEVITABLY ON EXTERNAL CLIMATE." THIS IS "NOT BECAUSE THERE IS ANY 'LINKAGE' WITH OTHER SPECIFIC SUBJECTS, BECAUSE 'IF SALT AGREEMENT IS IN OUR INTEREST, THEN WE SHOULD GO AHEAD AND CONSUMMATE IT.'" IT UNCLASSIFIED

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IS BECAUSE "TIMING, PUBLIC REACTION, CONGRESSIONAL REACTION -- ALL OF WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TO SALT AGREEMENT -- ARE INEVITABLY AFFECTED BY OTHER CONDITIONS." MARDER COMMENTED THAT "IN OTHER WORDS, BROWN AGAIN WAS UNDER-SCORING CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S VIEW THAT TOTALITY OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIPS CAN AFFECT WHAT HAPPENS AT CONCLUSIVE STAGE OF SALT DESPITE SOVIET INDIGNATION ABOUT INVOCATION OF DIRECT OR INDIRECT 'LINKAGE' WITH SALT."

8. SYNDICATED COLUMNIST GEORGE WILL, IN WASHINGTON POST,

ATTACKED ARTHUR COX'S ARGUMENT THAT BACKFIRE IS "PHONY ISSUE." COX'S ARTICLE "DESERVES NATIONAL ATTENTION" AS EXAMPLE OF KIND OF ADVOCACY NATION SOON WILL HEAR IN DEFENSE OF WHAT CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS DOING IN SALT. "IT ILLUSTRATES WHY TREATY THAT WILL BE PRODUCED BY PAUL WARNKE, ADMINISTRATION'S CHIEF NEGOTIATOR, WILL BE REJECTED BY SENATE." WILL SAID COX IS "PAID CONSULTANT TO WARNKE." IN HIS "REFUTING FACTS," WILL SAID "NEITHER BACKFIRE NOR U.S. CRUISE MISSILE WAS MENTIONED IN VLADIVOSTOK ACCORD. ONE REASON U.S. DID NOT DEMAND INCLUSION OF BACKFIRE WAS THAT SOVIETS WOULD THEN HAVE DEMANDED LIMITS ON CRUISE MISSILES. NOW WARNKE HAS NEGOTIATED AN AGREEMENT THAT LIMITS NUMBER OF CRUISE MISSILES AND LIMITS THEM TO 600-KILOMETER RANGE, WHILE LEAVING SOVIETS FREE TO DEPLOY AN UNLIMITED NUMBER OF BACKFIRES. FROM ITS FIRST SENTENCE, WHICH ASSERTS THAT OPPONENTS OF WARNKE'S TREATY ARE REALLY OPPONENTS OF ALL STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION, TO ITS LAST SENTENCE, WHICH DISMISSES BACKFIRE CONTROVERSY AS 'CHARADE,' COX'S ARTICLE IS MISLEADING. NARROWING, DESCENDING PATH TO DEFEAT IN SENATE IS PAVED WITH SUCH STUFF." (COX'S ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN LAST SUNDAY'S WASHINGTON POST AND SUMMARIZED IN APRIL 3 ROUNDUP). VANCE

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